

2004-2005
ANNUAL REPORT
OF THE
VIRGINIA ASIAN ADVISORY BOARD
TO
GOVERNOR MARK R. WARNER

AUGUST 5, 2005

VIRGINIA ASIAN ADVISORY BOARD

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In its second year, the Virginia Asian Advisory Board (VAAB) continued its high pace of activities to build bridges between state government and the Asian American communities in Virginia. The Board certainly accomplished the main goal of bringing the state government and Our Asian American communities to a closer understanding of one another.

More than 300 Asian American community leaders participated in the outreach efforts organized by and in partnership with VAAB throughout this one year period. These communities repeatedly raised concerns about domestic issues, in particular, education, limited language proficiency, and fairness and diversity related to employment and equal access to business opportunities. The many research and survey efforts conducted by VAAB's three committees consistently brought valuable inputs from the Asian American communities and the state governments in Virginia. The information derived from these outreaches was basis for many of the recommendations put forth in this report.

Our local and state elected officials attended various VAAB functions and meetings with informative layout of government processes and available state social services, and many became strong advocates of Asian American issues. In addition, regional economic development officers were invited to share with the board on domestic and international business development processes. In all, the VAAB has begun to take an active role in introducing and bringing about understanding of state and local run services to the Asian American communities.

VAAB organized two highly successful and visible networking events that brought about closer relationship between Asian American communities and business leaders, and on a non-partisan basis, our state and local officials. These events created first of many opportunities and interests for more Asian Americans to become involved in civic activities.

From these meetings and events, fact gathering, and analysis undertaken by the three committees of VAAB (Civic and Cultural committee, Education and Learning committee, and Business and Trade committee), the Board narrowed down the priority issues to the following recommendations:

1. In the Education and Learning areas, the Board's recommendations span all levels of education: pre K-12, College and Advanced Studies, and Community and Adult Education.

- (I) In the pre K-12 Public Education, the Boards finds inadequate attention has been placed on the students who scored at either ends of the spectrum while the average performance of Virginia K-12 students improved on all subjects in recent years. There is a lack of Asian language electives offered at the public school. Furthermore, many textbook topics on Asia and Asian studies lack balance and perspectives and contain incorrect information.

VAAB recommends that the Commonwealth (1) allocate adequate resources to develop, improve, and sustain the needed remedial education programs and to expand ESL teacher training; (2) increase budget significantly to broaden

the state supported public school-based gifted/specialty programs; (3) offer a special grant to initiate Asian language courses in public schools where there is demand, in order to enable the students to communicate and compete in a global environment in the future; (4) require the Commonwealth's Textbook and Selection and Adoption Committee to request all competing publishers (vendors) to submit textbook drafts for review and input by Virginia experts, educators, and parents on topics relating to Asia and the Asian studies; (5) designate the 2nd or 3rd week of May as Asian American Heritage Education week in Public School to enhance the understanding of and appreciation for contributions made by Asian Americans and Asian cultures to this country.

- (II) In College Education and Advanced Studies, the Board finds disparity in hiring at the top administrative positions and in salary compensation when it comes to faculty members of Asian heritage. VAAB recommends that the Commonwealth (1) allot budget and require The State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) to collect statistical data on faculty salary and administrative appointments by rank, race, gender, ethnicity; (2) establish scholarships for student college/university exchange programs for both international and Virginia students; (3) provide funds to allow international scholars to teach or perform research at Virginia colleges/universities in order to benefit and advance Virginia academic and research institutions.
- (III) In Community and Adult Educational Programs, the Board recommends the Commonwealth to recognize the important values of diversity and multiculturalism, and carry-out the training regularly in the public schools and the state executive branch agencies.

2. With the Civic and Cultural committee's work, the Board made recommendations on issues in three areas:

- (I) In the area of Limited English Proficiency, VAAB urges the Governor to fully implement HJR 71 recommendations and require the related State agencies work together to provide the needed service and support to the Asian American communities.
- (II) In the area of civil participation in Virginia Government, VAAB recommends the Governor to form a task force addressing the obstacles that prohibit the Asian Americans' involvement into the political process. And to request election monitors from the US Department of Justice Civil Rights Division to assure Asian Americans may exercise their voting right without being hindered by the language barrier.
- (III) In order to support the Board's work effectively, VAAB urges the Governor appropriately consider a working budget to allow the necessary expense and sufficient staff support.

3. With the work of Business & Trade committee, the Board made recommendations in two areas:

- (I) The committee urges the Governor to (1) strengthen and establish programs to enhance the economic viability of minority-owned businesses (including, but not limited to, Asian American businesses) that include training on public as well as private procurement opportunities, a mentoring-protégé program, and looking into ways to simplify the procurement process. (2) In addition, the procurement program needs to be monitored and evaluated to assess the real economic impact on the Asian American businesses through the State's procurement program.

- (II) VAAB was proud that Governor Warner followed through with our recommendation from the 2004 report and we request that more Virginia Trade Missions are planned to foster and strengthen the economic ties with Asian countries. In addition, the Commonwealth should continuously evaluate what incentives are offered to foreign investors so that we remain competitive.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Virginia Asian Advisory Board (VAAB) is a governmental entity of the Commonwealth of Virginia that serves as a formal liaison between the Commonwealth government and the Asian American communities in the Commonwealth. VAAB consists of community activists, entrepreneurs, educators, health care providers, businesspeople and public servants from several of the main regions of Virginia and nearly all Asian ethnic groups. Together we represent the rich diversity of cultures and talents in the Commonwealth's Asian American community.

Pursuant to Section 2.2-2450 of the Code of Virginia, this Annual Report is submitted to Governor Mark R. Warner as a summary of the Virginia Asian Advisory Board's activities from July 2004 to June 2005. The Report includes recommendations for the Governor and executive branch agencies to consider and adopt in order to enhance the level of participation of Asian Americans in the Commonwealth's programs and services.

Our recommendations are developed and organized through the work of three subcommittees: Education and Learning; Civic and Cultural; and Business and Trade. Each subcommittee led by its subcommittee chair, conduct independent research, surveys, and evaluations. The board unanimously approved the recommendations submitted by the committees.

This is the final VAAB report of this administration. Through our activities of the past two years, we have established a bridge between the State Government and the Asian American community in Virginia. We have participated in numerous community activities, established an organizational structure, set up a web page (in which all meeting minutes and reports are published), conducted research into the needs of the Asian community, and produced two annual reports with recommendations for the Governor. We encourage future Boards to strengthen the level of activity and to build upon our efforts to integrate the Asian community into mainstream public discourse. We appreciate this opportunity to have served the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Asian community.

II. VIRGINIA ASIAN ADVISORY BOARD

A. Background and History

The Virginia Asian Advisory Board ("VAAB" or "Board") was established by statute in 2001 during Governor James S. Gilmore's administration. Delegate Leo C. Wardrup (R-Virginia Beach) introduced House bill HB2859 in January 2001 to create a board to advise the Governor "on ways to improve economic and cultural links between the Commonwealth and Pacific Rim nations, with a focus on the areas of commerce and trade, art and education, and general government." Governor Mark R. Warner made the first appointment to 16 members initially on June 12, 2003. An additional member was appointed shortly to make a 17 members' Board.

B. Authorizing Statute

While the original intent of the 2001 authorizing statute was broad in its jurisdictional charge to VAAB, many members in the Asian American community believed that the language of Section 2.2-2448 of the Code of Virginia did not give an equally strong focus towards domestic issues. Thus, during the 2004 session of the General Assembly, the Code of Virginia was amended to clarify that VAAB's jurisdiction expressly includes issues affecting Asian American communities in the Commonwealth in addition to those involving relations between Virginia and Asian nations.

The revised Code Section 2.2-2448, along with the rest of the authorizing statute (§§ 2.2-2448 to 2.2-2451) is stated in its entirety in the 2004 VAAB Annual Report, which is located at: www.vaab.virginia.gov.

C. Board Members

The following are the current members of the VAAB and their residence and professional affiliations:

Ranjana W. Chachra of Blacksburg is a real estate investor

Wai-Ping Chan of Alexandria is an attorney in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Civil Rights

Liu-Jen C. Chu of Richmond is a community advocate and a former chair of the Asian American Society of Central Virginia

Robert O. Colorina of Chesapeake is a director with American Industrial Corporation

Conrado B. "Dick" Dabu of Norfolk is a U.S. Navy veteran and former chairman of the Filipino Culture Center

Nalin Jain of Fairfax is the director of the Arlington Small Business Development Center, George Mason University

Manbir "Manny" Kathuria of Fairfax is founder and president of International Business Systems, Inc.

Mark L. Keam of Vienna is chief counsel to U.S. Senator Richard J. Durbin on the Senate Judiciary Committee

Rafat Mahmood of Alexandria is a real estate developer

Thomas W. McCandlish of Richmond is a partner with the law firm of McCandlish and Holton

Krittika Onsanit of Richmond is an international student and internship advisor at the University of Richmond

Silvia Y. Patton of Fairfax Station is president of Fairview Park Florist and chair of the Organization of Korean-American Women, Inc.

Ravi Prasad of Richmond is president of Sri Balaji Corporation, Prasad Associates, Inc., and OM & OM Management, and the current Chair of the Asian American Society of Central Virginia.

Dilip Sarkar of Suffolk is a vascular surgeon and associate professor of surgery at Eastern Virginia Medical School

Francis M. Stevens of Petersburg is a retail manager and former member of the Petersburg City Council

Leon R. Wang of Norfolk is professor emeritus and former chairman of the civil engineering department at Old Dominion University

The current Board also includes the following cabinet secretaries as ex officio members:

Secretary Michael J. Schewel of the Department of Commerce and Trade

Secretary Belle S. Wheelan of the Department of Education

Secretary Jane H. Woods of the Department of Health and Human Resources

The Board is assisted by Rupa Somanath, a staff member of the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth. In addition, Amy Kim, Minority Business Outreach Liaison, from the Virginia Department of Business Assistance has ex officio status.

D. Board Committees

VAAB created the following three committees, each with several Board members, to carry out its duties in a more efficient manner:

Civic and Cultural Committee. Chaired by Wai-Ping Chan, this committee's goals are to address the Asian American communities' concerns by; increasing their awareness of the Commonwealth government's services and programs, promoting the increase of Asian American participation in these activities, and